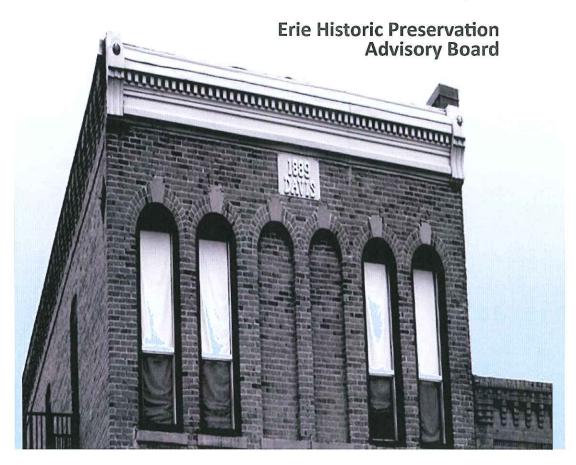
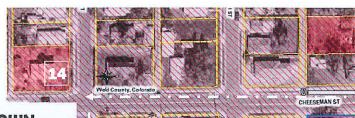
Erie History Walking Tour

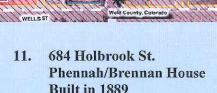
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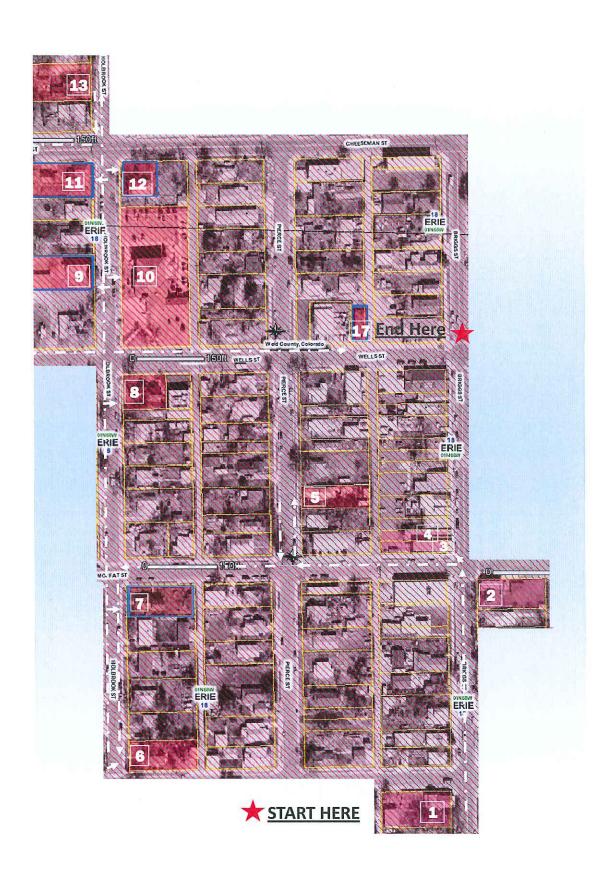


HISTORIC OLD TOWN WALKING TOUR

- 1. 370 Briggs St. Egnew Hotel/Powell House Built in 1890-91
- 2. 485 Briggs St. First Bank Building Built in 1888.
- 3. 500 Briggs St.
 I.O.O.F. Hall
 State Mercantile Company
 Built in 1889
- 4. 502 Briggs St. Elzi Drugstore Built in 1892
- 5. 525 Pierce St. Coffin House Built in 1884.
- 6. 405 Holbrook St. Miner's Cottage Built in 1892
- 7. 485 Holbrook St. The Bixler House Built in 1884
- 8. 575 Holbrook St. The Lawley House Built in the 1880's
- 9. 604 Holbrook St.
 Erie Episcopal Methodist Church
 Built in 1888
- 10. 645 Holbrook St. Lincoln School/Town Hall Built in 1897



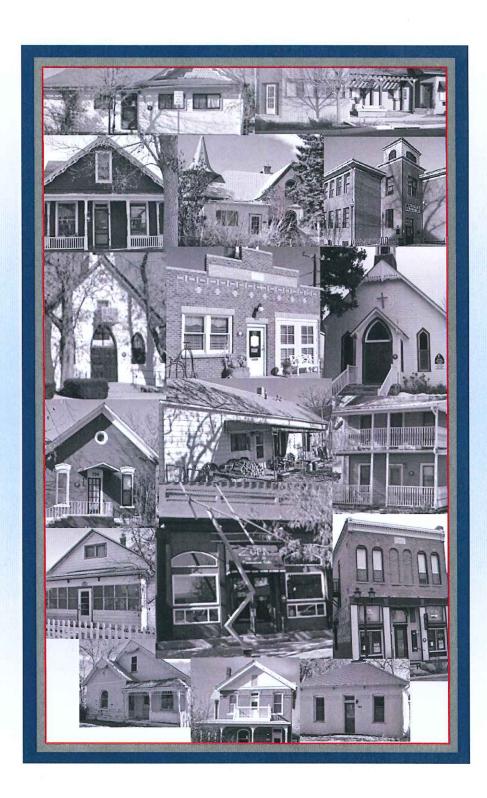
- 12. 675 Holbrook St.
 Morrison/Charlesworth
 House
 Built in 1897
- 13. 724 Holbrook Street Wilson House Built in 1887
- 14. 704 Main Street Morgan/Carter House Built in 1892
- 15. 575 Wells Street
 St. Scholastica Catholic
 Church
 Built in 1899
- 16. 604 High Street Nicholson House Built in 1895
- 17. 235 Wells Street Second Erie Town Hall Built in 1930-31



The structures you will see on this walking tour tell the story of life here during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. A small collection of houses strung out along Coal Creek were occupied by farmers in the 1850's and 60's. When coal was discovered in large quantities and the railroad came through in 1871, miners flooded the area and it became a town, incorporated in 1874. Named Erie after Erie, Pennsylvania, the town flourished as a coal mining town until the last mine closed in 1967. Its population remained constant between 800 and 1200 during most of this time, but Erie in 2011 is estimated to contain 19,000 people.

To experience the entire tour, begin with the Egnew Hotel at 370 Briggs and follow the arrows. Most of the structures will have a large round medallion with the image of a tree on them, but some do not. Pay no attention to the numbers on these medallions—follow the route by using the street addresses. One or two people should be able to complete the tour in about an hour. Larger groups could take a little longer.

The source of most of the material in this brochure is a survey of possible historic places conducted by Front Range Research Associates, Inc. Tom and Laurie Simmons.



370 Briggs Street Egnew Hotel/Powell House

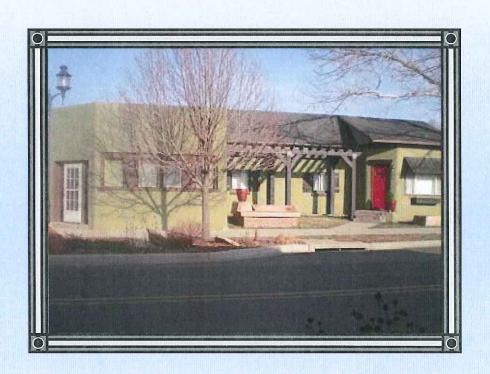
Built in 1890-91 by Alice Powell, daughter of Erie founder, the Rev. Richard J. Van Valkenburg, the structure was used mainly as a boarding house for miners and to a lesser extent for travelers. In its prime it had nine sleeping rooms upstairs, a parlor, a long gambling room, a dining room and a kitchen downstairs. Out-house and washing room were out back. For their rent, miners got a bed, dinner and a box lunch for the mines.

The building went through many ownership changes and was operated as a hotel until 1992 when it became a private residence. Its architectural style is late Victorian.



485 Briggs Street First Bank Building

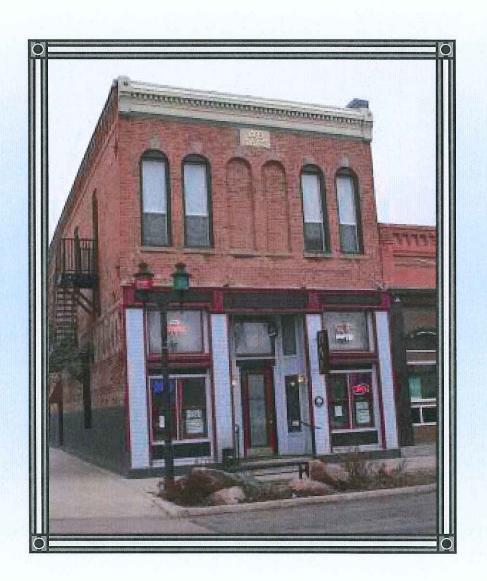
Built in 1888. Little is known about this building authoritatively. It was an early bank building-lore suggests it was Erie's first bank building. Later it was an early post office.



500 Briggs Street I.O.O.F. Hall State Mercantile Company

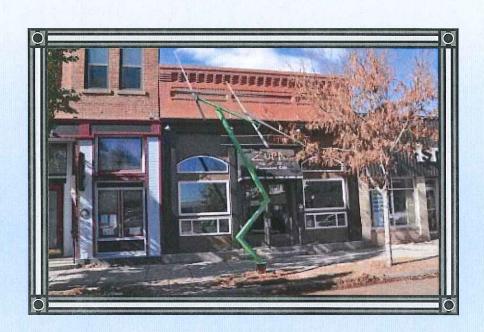
Built in 1889 by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Lodge #40, creating a meeting room on the second floor and a mercantile space on the first floor to help pay for the building.

For many years, the second floor room served as a major social gathering place for the I.O.O.F., the Masons, and numerous town events. The first floor contained a procession of general merchandise stores, starting with the Lockwood Trading Company and including the State Mercantile Company, whose sign, probably painted around 1900, is still visible on the south wall. Probably the most important social and commercial building in Erie well into the 20th century. Architectural style is 19th Century Commercial.



502 Briggs Street Elzi Drugstore

Built in 1892 by the Winslow Smith Mercantile Company. It became the drugstore in Erie when it was bought by Dr. Walter Smith in 1893. In 1912. Charles Elzi began working in the drugstore and bought it a few years later when Dr. Smith died. He operated the drugstore until 1972. During his long career he served two separated terms as mayor of Erie and was President of the Erie Bank. He was known as the friendliest and most helpful Erie merchant. The building has been extensively modified, and little of its original architecture is left beyond the upper third of its eastern façade.

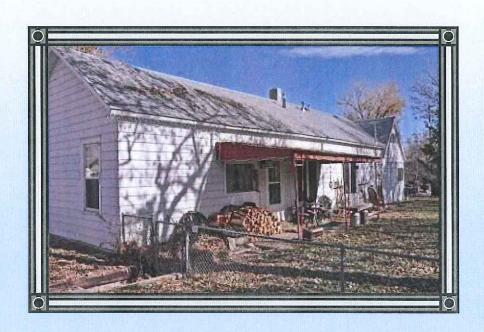


525 Pierce Street Coffin House

Built in 1884. The Rev. Richard J. Van Valkenburg bought the building in 1886 and operated an undertaking business in it until 1900. Coffins were built in the back and sold out of the front. The French doors on the south side of the building allowed an easy exit of the coffins.

In 1904 J. G. Tresizee acquired the building and continued the undertaking business for 4 more years. He was a professional undertaker and president of the Colorado Funeral Directors Association in 1899. He was Boulder County Coroner from 1892 until at least 1911. In 1908, the building became a schoolhouse briefly, receiving the overflow from the Lincoln School. Around 1910 it was converted into a private residence.

The current owner of the house was born in it many decades ago. Except for the French doors, the structure bears little resemblance to its original look. For instance, the false front that was on it while it was a business establishment is long gone.



405 Holbrook Street Miner's Cottage

Built in 1892 by Enoch Vaughan, who lived in the house with his wife and 7 children. This house is a fine example of a miner's cottage. Typically, they were built cheaply of wood. They were square, each containing a parlor, a dining room, a bedroom and a kitchen. The chimney for the pot belly stove exited the house at the peak of the roof.

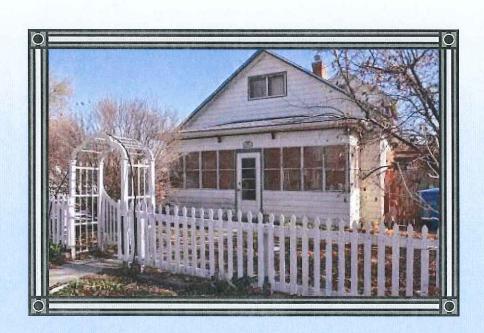
They existed all over Erie, but few of them remain. The Vaughan House was better built, of brick, and a later addition to the east gave more room. The style is Late Victorian/Italianate.



485 Holbrook Street The Bixler House

Built in 1884 by John Williams, a prominent merchant who owned a general merchandise store. He was one of the first trustees of the town, serving in 1875 and 1879; and he served as Erie's second mayor from 1775-76. The second prominent person to live here was Dr. Clarence Bixler. He began his medical career here in 1909, living in the back rooms and seeing patients in the front room. He was assured a steady income from mining companies in Lafayette and Erie, and he cared for injured miners around the clock, 7 days a week.

In 1927 he saved the lives of a dozen miners who had been shot by militia during a strike. He introduced penicillin into the whole of Boulder Valley. Somehow he found time to serve as President of the Erie Bank in the 1920's and early 1930's. In 1961, Bixler's daughter sold some farm land which he had acquired and formed the Bixler Family Foundation, which in 2005 gave \$9,000,000 to the University of Colorado for programs in art, music and architecture.



575 Holbrook Street The Lawley House

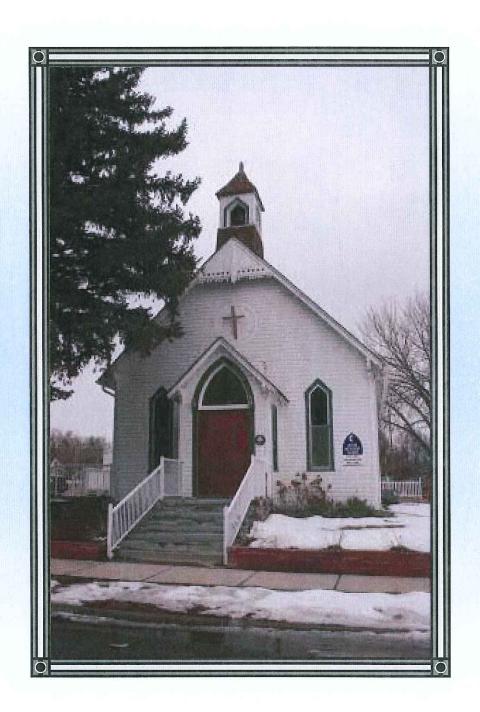
Built in the 1880's by Robert and Martha Lawley. The house is historically important primarily because of its architecture, although Robert Lawley came to Erie in 1871, making him a founding resident. Outstanding characteristics of this Late Victorian house includes the gabled roof, the decorative verge boards, the projecting porch with turned spindle supports, and the tall windows.



604 Holbrook Street Erie Episcopal Methodist Church

Built in 1888 by the Methodist Congregation, led by the Rev. Richard J. Van Valkenburg He came to the Erie area in 1866 from Erie, Pennsylvania. He married Cordelia Briggs, daughter of Henry Briggs, who was president of the Boulder Valley Coal Company. He was one of the incorporators of Erie in 1874 and was its most important founder. It was his Sunday School class, the first in Erie and meeting in homes, that formed the Methodist Congregation. In addition to starting the first church in Erie, he also founded both the I.O.O.F. chapter and the Masons in Erie, the first undertaking business and the first hotel. He also edited the first newspaper. He was a mayor, often a trustee of the town and a state representative.

The church served Protestants in Erie for many decades, and it continues to do so today. It was also a very important venue for social activities for the entire population. Its Late Victorian architecture is almost totally unchanged today. The building was constructed by prominent carpenter James L. Wilson, responsible for many early structures in Erie.



645 Holbrook Street Lincoln School/Town Hall

Built in 1897 as the second school on this property, it is one of only four two-story structures in old town Erie. It served all grades in this one building, but miners had many children! Two additions were soon needed, and still the Coffin House was pressed into service for some grade school children in 1908.

As time passed, a separate high school was built, then a middle school and several elementary schools. Finally, in the 1960's, the School Board gave the building to the Town of Erie. After a total remodel on the inside, Lincoln School became Town Hall. The building is on the national register of historic places.



684 Holbrook Street Phennah/Brennan House

Built in 1889 by Martha and Peter Phennah who lived here until 1917. Martha was a prominent example of a female business person in a maledominated town. She made and sold ladies hats from the residence. Peter was a census taker. Michael James Brennan bought the house in 1917 and lived here until his death in 1968.

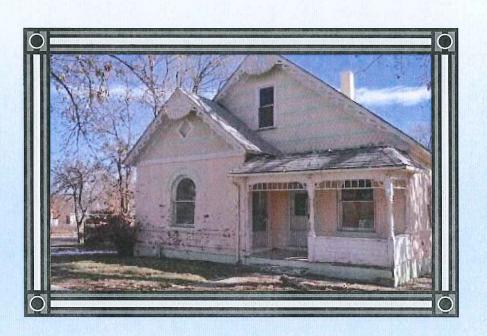
He owned a pool hall in Erie and served as Justice of the Peace. He also was a mayor of Erie.



675 Holbrook Street Morrison/Charlesworth House

Built in 1897, this house is the best example of Queen Anne architecture in Erie. It features a double gabled roof, decorative shingles on the lower gabled face, a round arch window and a fanshaped apron at the apex of the gable. Historically, the house was home to two prominent men associated with mining.

George Morrison was the first owner of the house, and he was superintendent of one of the major mines around Erie. He had moved to Superior by 1900. In 1919, James Charlesworth bought the house. He was a miner who worked his way up to foreman, and in 1937 he was elected to the state House of Representatives.



724 Holbrook Street Wilson House

Built in 1887 by James L. Wilson. Wilson was a carpenter who built many of the early structures in Erie, including the Methodist Church. He also organized a volunteer "hose company" or fire department. He served two stints as mayor of Erie, in 1888-89 and in 1915-21 and was Justice of the Peace in the early 1920's. He lived in the house until 1938 when he died.

The Late Victorian architecture shows a transitional element in the round window.



704 Main Street Morgan/Carter House

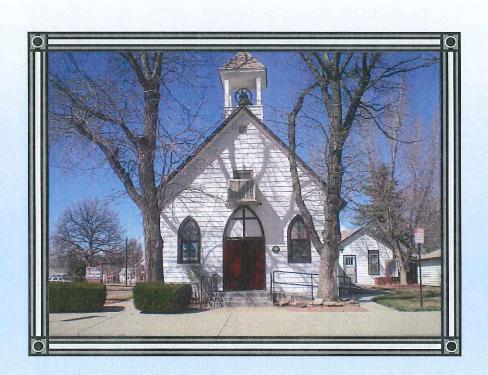
Built in 1892 by John S. Morgan. Morgan was a pioneer resident of Erie and one of its most prominent merchants. He owned, alone or with his brother, dry goods and general mercantile stores in various locations, including for a time on the first floor of the I.O.O.F. Hall. He also was postmaster in Erie for a while and was a town trustee in 1879. The house is a fine example of large scale Queen Anne style.

It has multiple gables, brick walls, decorative courses of brick work, decorative shingles and verge boards, a variety of windows, the porch with turned spindles and a balcony. The changes through time are not great.



575 Wells Street St. Scholastica Catholic Church.

Built in 1899 by the Benedictine Order, St. Scholastica was the end product of the establishment of Catholicism in 1871 for many of the Lithuanian, French, Slavic and Italian miners. In 1898, Rev. Cornelius Enders, having built a church in Ward, brought in his own wagon lumber from the mountains to build the Erie Church. The fortunes of the Church have waxed and waned, but it survives today to serve the Catholics in Erie. The Parish Hall to the east was once a chapel at the Columbine Mine which was moved first to Lafavette and then to its present location in 1957. The Church and the Parish Hall are both notable for the spiritual and social life provided Catholics, but the two buildings have been greatly altered over time.



604 High Street Nicholson House

Built in 1895 by William Nicholson, the house was thought by some to be the finest in Erie at the time. Nicholson must be considered one of the most prominent citizens of the town through its first 60 years. He was born in England and started working in mines when he was 8 years old. At age 31 he moved to Erie where he became superintendent of mines. He invested in mines, started a coal company and sold all of his holdings eventually to the Rocky Mountain Coal Company.

He also started Erie Bank and operated it for seven years. He was a member of many social and civic organizations in town, and he served Erie five different times as mayor. The first beginning in 1888 and the last beginning in 1929. The house is one of the larger Queen Anne houses in Erie.



235 Wells Street Second Erie Town Hall

Built in 1930-31 by the Town of Erie; it was constructed in several stages to avoid having to float a bond issue. The front section, containing a meeting room and a space for a fire truck, was built first. Then came the jail and a storage room, and then offices for town personnel.

Note the bell at the top front of the roof and the siren behind the building—all part of the vital work of the volunteer fire department. The style of the building is early twentieth century commercial and appears very nearly as it did in 1931.

It housed the town government until 1967, and it is now the home of the Erie Chamber of Commerce.

